As I have mentioned in previous posts, this Liberal leadership race has, and will probably remain, completely devoid of any inkling of substance or ideas.

Especially when it comes to the frontrunners, empty credentialism and the "narcissism of small differences" seem to be the defining themes of this contest.

However, analyzing the endorsements from members of the Liberal caucus is one of the few ways we can gain any deeper insights into who the candidates are appealing to.

After all, internal party politics mostly happens behind closed doors, with endorsements often being the only public result of those private machinations.

For the sake of simplicity and relevance, I will focus only on endorsements from current members of the Liberal caucus, excluding former MPs/Cabinet Ministers.

And before I begin naming the trends present in the endorsements, it is worth sharing the number of endorsements in total. As of January 24th, 40 MPs have backed Carney, 28 have backed Freeland, and just two have thrown their support behind Gould.

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Swing vs. Safe Ridings

There doesn't seem to be much of a difference in terms of the margin MPs backing either candidate won in the last election. The average margin for a Carneyite MP is 17.15%, while Freelanders netted a slightly higher 17.93%[1].

However, there is a noticeable divergence when one examines endorsements from MPs in ridings with thinner margins. 17.86% of Freeland's caucus endorsements came from MPs whose margin of victory in the last election was less than 5%; just 7.50% of Carneyites fall into the same category.

This divergence narrows, though, when those who won with less than a 10% margin are included—28.57% of Freeland's caucus support comes from this tier, with Carney close behind at 27.50%.

There are multiple ways this data can be examined. On one hand, having more MPs from swing ridings endorsing you should, in theory, be a good sign—it could be seen as a sign that they have more confidence that you can win, as their chances of winning again are precarious at best. On the

other hand, given the absolute dominance that the Conservatives have shown in the polls over the past year, any Liberal MP in a riding that was remotely close last time will face almost certain defeat. This knowledge of inevitable political annihilation might make them cavalier in regards to throwing their support behind the stronger candidate, which means they could be indifferent to the potential strength of who they endorse and simply be supporting their preferred candidate only because they personally prefer that candidate.

Things get even more interesting when the chances of winning re-election are thrown in. On average, Freelanders have a 29.44% chance of returning to the House of Commons, while that number stands at just 22.63% for Carneyites.

The first thing that pops out about both of these percentages is that they are extraordinarily low—indeed, the Liberal caucus would shrink to just 27% of its current size if an election were held today. The second noteworthy feature of this statistic is the 6.81% gap between Freelanders and Carneyites. This gap—though not huge—is large enough to suggest

that some Freelanders are slightly more secure in their positions than Carneyites are—at least when it comes to winning again.

Regional Differences

Using YAPms.com (Yet Another Political Map Simulator), I created a map of all of the Liberal caucus endorsements in this leadership race. This makes it easier to assess which regions candidates are picking up support from.

Western Canada (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Territories) is evenly split; 9 Carneyites and 7 Freelanders hail from the vast region.

Quebec is a similar story, with Carney receiving 7 endorsements and Freeland 5.

Atlantic Canada and Ontario, however, are dominated by Carney; he leads 6-to-2 and 22-to-14 in each region respectively.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about these numbers is the lack of endorsements from Quebec—only 12 of the province's 33 Liberal MPs have jumped in to support a candidate.

A large part of the reason for this is that neither candidate is from Quebec—a province that is famously parochial when it comes to political preferences.

Despite this, Quebec will still play a critical role in determining who becomes the next Liberal leader, as it has 23% of Canada's ridings, and every riding is worth 100 points according to the rules of the race.

Cabinet Ministers and MPs jumping ship

When it comes to endorsements from Cabinet Ministers, Mark Carney has the clear advantage. So far, 11 cabinet ministers have thrown their support behind him, compared to just 5 for Freeland.

This is a rather damning indictment of Freeland's lack of ability to capitalize on her former position as a senior minister in Trudeau's government. If there was to be any natural constituency for her among

the Liberal caucus, it would be with the other members of the King's Privy Council.

For her to be trailing in cabinet endorsements to a man who has never held *any* cabinet position signals that either a) her colleagues lost faith in her due to her poor performance as Finance Minister or b) her abrupt resignation from cabinet and scolding of Trudeau for entertaining "costly political gimmicks" rubbed other ministers the wrong way.

Considering the general lack of emphasis on basic competence that has characterized the Trudeau government, I suspect that the latter of these options is more plausible.

Either way, this is not a good sign for her if she wants to even think about winning the leadership, as other cabinet ministers can bring organizational strength and regional clout to a campaign.

More ominous signs appear for Freeland when one looks at the percentage of caucus Freelanders who aren't running for re-election—21.42%. Only 15% of Carneyites aren't re-offering.

Having such a large chunk of your endorsers not want to run—even under their preferred choice of Prime Minister—signals a lack of confidence in Freeland and her ability to perform at the ballot box.

Diaspora Groups

This, by far, is the most striking difference between the Freelanders and the Carneyites—it is, frankly, my primary motivation for writing this article.

40% of the Carneyites are visible minorities, while the "visible minority" label applies to just 14.29% of Freelanders.

This, on its face, may seem slightly odd, yet ultimately insignificant.

Things become more clear, however, once these MPs are singled out in their individuality.

The MPs backing Carney include radical anti-Israel activists (Salma Zahid, Sameer Zuberi), Khalistani sympathizers (Harjit Sajjan, Randeep

Sarai, Iqwinder Gaheer), and an MP who has been influenced by the CCP (Parm Bains).

Taken together, it becomes clear that Mark Carney—out of the public eye—has pandered to fringe diaspora groups in order to establish a base of support within the Liberal caucus.

Pandering to such groups has always been an easy road for cynical politicians looking to gain quick votes—those within diaspora communities are often naive about the state of Canadian politics and can easily be persuaded into supporting a certain candidate provided the narrow interests of their identity group are fulfilled.

Yet this support comes at a cost—one that may not be felt by the exploitative politician in question but one that is harbored by the rest of Canadian society.

Radical anti-Israel activists, for instance, don't exclusively question the sovereignty of and delegitimize the Jewish State—they apply the exact same language to Canada and its institutions.

Khalistanis see Canada as merely a safe haven from which they can agitate in favour of creating an ethnocultural Sikh homeland in the Punjab province of India.

The Chinese government is only interested in Canada as long as it can sense weakness in Canada—a weakness that it seeks to exploit in order to flex its muscles as a world superpower.

None of these groups deem our cultural values, our liberties, or our way of life to be of any importance to them—except if they can exploit those things to further their own ends.

And if politicians continue to wink and nod at those who see Canada as nothing but a vessel to take advantage of, our already-frayed social cohesion and trust in each other is at risk.

1

MPs supporting Karina Gould won by an average of 5.28%—however, just two MPs have endorsed her and both hold swing ridings in the corner of the GTA Gould is from.